

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 DRC-01 AID-20 PC-04 /138 W

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R 121943Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6286

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 0596

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, HO, ES

SUBJ: HONDURAS/SALVADOR DISPUTE; SAN JOSE MEETING OF
MILITARY

REF: STATE 025605; SAN SALVADOR 0532

SUMMARY: FONMIN BATRES IS UNHAPPY ABOUT POSTPONEMENT
OF CA PRESIDENTS' MEETING AND DISCOURAGED ABOUT
PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS ON SALVADOR/HONDURAS PROBLEM.
WHILE SKEPTICAL ABOUT PRESIDENT MOLINA'S AUTHORITY,
BATRES THINKS HE DETECTS A RELATIVELY MORE FAVORABLE
ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF SENIOR SALVADORAN OFFICERS
TOWARDS DELINEATING THE BORDER. HE MENTIONS THE
POSSIBILITY OF SECRETARY KISSINGER MEDIATING THE
PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. ON FEB 10 FONMIN BATRES ASKED ME TO HIS HOUSE TO
DELIVER HIS REPLY TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER.
AFTER OUR DISCUSSION OF THE LETTERS, HE SURPRISED ME
BY ASKING ABOUT STORIES TO THE EFFECT THAT SECRETARY
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KISSINGER MIGHT MEDIATE HONDURAS/SALVADOR DISAGREEMENT.

I SAID THAT I HAD ONLY HEARD REPORT AS LOCAL NEWSPAPER SPECULATION.

2. BATRES SAID HE WAS FRUSTRATED AT LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE AHEAD ON TALKS. IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT NOTHING FURTHER COULD BE SCHEDULED UNTIL APRIL. HE ASKED ME ABOUT HOW USG ASSESSED INTERNAL POSITION IN SALVADOR, BUT I HAD NOTHING TO OFFER ON THIS BEYOND SAYING I UNDERSTOOD THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WAS LETHARGIC SO FAR. I MENTIONED FREQUENT VAGUE STORY THAT SALVADORAN MILITARY WERE BARRIER TO PROGRESS, BUT SAID I HAD NEVER SEEN ANY OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE OF THIS. BATRES SAID HE THOUGHT THE TROUBLE WAS ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE. BORGONOVO WAS FOR SOME REASON "AFRIAD" OF THE ISSUE, AND BATRES DID NOT THINK PRESIDENT MOLINA HAD THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE AN AGREED SETTLEMENT PREVAIL. ON THE OTHER HAND, BATRES AVERRED THAT SOME OF THE SENIOR SALVADORAN MILITARY WERE HELPFUL, AND HE THOUGHT EVEN POSITIVELY MINDED TOWARDS A BORDER DELINEATION. HE STATED THAT SALVADORAN COMMANDERS HAD TRIED TO PREVENT ANY PUBLICITY ON THE LAST TWO SHOOTING INCIDENTS (THE FISHERMEN AND THE SMUGGLER WHO WERE KILLED), BUT THAT POLITICAL ELEMENTS HAD PLAYED THEM UP.

3. I ASKED HIM ABOUT SAN JOSE MEETING BETWEEN GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS OF HONDURAS/SALVADOR AND WHETHER THEY HAD ESTABLISHED JOINT COMMISSION TO STUDY OR DELINEATE BORJIR. HE SAID NO STUDY COMMISSION WAS SET UP. THE SALVADORAN MILITARY WERE INTERESTED IN SETTING UP ARRANGEMENTS FOR INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND CONTACTS, AS THERE SEEMED TO BE HARDSHIP IN THE SALVADORAN FRONTIER AREAS. THIS WAS THE SUBJECT OF TALKS, ACCORDING TO BATRES. I PROBED HIM AGAIN WHETHER A JOINT MILITARY STUDY GROUP MIGHT NOT HAVE SOME ADVANTAGES, BUT HE CONTINUED TO BE NEGATIVE. HE SAID EVEN AT THE JALAPA MEETING WHEN HE APOSED THE IDEA, THERE WAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE SALVADORANS PRIMARILY WANTED THE "MILITARY STUDY GROUP" TO CONCENTRATE ON TAKING A CENSUS OF LOCAL QHABITANTS.

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4. I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE ANTIGUA AGREEMENTS, NOTING OUR PUZZLEMENT AT THE DIFFERING FIGURES WHICH WERE GIVEN, MOSTLY IN 1972, AS TO HOW MUCH TERRITORY REMAINED IN DISPUTE, E.G. MORE THAN 400 SQ. KMS, 196 SQ. KMS, ETC. BATRES SAID THAT THE TWO SIDES DEFINED THE DISPUTED AREA AS 420 SQ. KMS, IN SIMILAR PAPERS WHICH EACH COUNTRY DEPOSITED WITH THE GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. FURTHER

REDUCTION OF AREA WAS NOT REPEAT NOT ACHIEVED BY FONMINS
ALVARADO PUERTO AND BORGONOVO, BUT BY "ENGINEERS,"
I.E. THE CARTOGRAPHIC EXPERTS. CARTOGRAPHERS HAD
INFORMALLY "SOLVED" PROBLEM OF FOUR OF SIX POCKETS OF
DISPUTED AREAS. THIS IS BACKGROUND OF STATEMENT THAT ONLY
TWO POCKETS REMAINED UNRESOLVED. BUT MEANTIME, BATRES
NOTED, EL SALVADOR DID NOT SEEM TO WANT TO DISCUSS
EVEN THE MUTUALLY AGREED ANTIGUA COUNTERCLAIMS.

COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE THAT ALVARADO
POUERTO, WHO IS SOMEWHAT EBULLIENT, MAY HAVE EXAGGERATED
OR MISINTERPRETED WHAT WAS ACTUALLY DONE IN SAN JOSE.
WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY SALVADOR'S COMMENT IN ITS REFTEL,
I.E. THAT MECHANISM IS PRETTY RUDIMENTARY AT THIS
POINT.
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